

Conservation and Environmental Stewardship

Situation Overview:

As shared by Andy Bollinger

A. *How does this farm view their environmental responsibilities for both the farm and land? Please describe.* For the last 20 – 25 years, my parents and I have taken care of the land we've been blessed with in Lancaster County. When we consider changes on the farm, we think of the greater community. We use cover crops to prevent soil erosion and do our part to keep the creeks clean that surround our farm. We've always believed in cover cropping, long before it became popular.

B. *What conservation and environmental best management practices (BMPs) have been incorporated into the farm plan the last 5 – 10 years?* We identified being good stewards of the environment as a goal during our transformation team project. Our responsibility to the environment is a high priority. With the help of our team, we secured a PENNVEST grant to help us clean-up run-off from the farm and cow walkways. The following BMPs apply to our farm:

- Crop residue management
- No-till
- Conservation till
- Contour strip cropping
- Filter strip
- Conservation buffers
- Crop rotations
- Cover crops
- Grassed waterways
- Terraces
- Stream bank protection
- Stream crossings
- Animal trails / Walkways
- Structure for water control
- Barnyard runoff controls / Heavy use area protection (i.e...Animal concentration areas)
- Water (manure) storages / Manure stacking
- Animal mortality handling facility
- Milk house waste diversion (Goes into regular manure storage)
- Roof runoff management
- Precision feeding / Feed management

C. *Does the farm have a Nutrient Management Plan (NMP) or Manure Management Plan? Did this project change the way the farm handles animal manure? Please describe.* Yes. We keep water out of manure run-off by covering cow walkways with our PENNVEST funding secured during this transformation team project.

D. *Are phosphorus levels in your soils rising to excessive levels [200 ppm of P] due to the application of manure generated on the farm? Please describe.* No. Phosphorus levels are not rising to excessive levels. We grow a lot of alfalfa, which also helps manage phosphorus. At Meadow Spring Farm, we have no fields that we aren't allowed to spread manure on.

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E. *Is manure applied in the winter months (generally December – February)? Is the manure applied in winter due to not enough storage or for other reasons such as timing, field conditions in spring, etc.? [if yes, for what particular reason(s):]* Yes, where there are cover crops planted only, per farm conservation plan.

F. *Does the farm have a conservation plan or an agricultural erosion and sedimentation control plan? If yes, what are the key components?* Yes. Key components include staying away from streams with manure; track how much manure we haul; and work with crop consultants to track crop application rates.

G. *Can the farm quantify the environmental impact of the project?* We no longer have stream run-off because of the changes made during the project.

H. *What is the most significant environmental/conservation improvement made on this operation within the last 5 years, and what improvement(s) did it result in?* The PENNVEST project allowed us to fix our calf facilities. We concreted the calf barn area and also added a roof. Once calves are out of the hutches, they now go into the transition barn. PENNVEST calls it heavy use area.

[Click here for a video interview](#) with Representative Gordon Denlinger discussing more of our environmental and conservation practices.

